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THE 1925 MESSAGE

FROM

THE VANDERBILT HYBRID DELPHINIUMS

San Rafael, California



THE NEW V.H. TEST GARDENS
(Belle Ave. at Union St.)

TO THE V. H. CIRCLE:—

Once more we greet Delphinium Friends, now truly "linked round the world," for they write from every state and province in America and Canada (except N. M.) and from many foreign lands about V.H. plantings. Wintering well at thirty below in the northland or blooming cheerfully in Texas heat under shade; glorious on high central mountain slopes or featuring blues at the sea shore;— the V. H. plants bring hint of the ocean's blue or of bits of the sky itself into homes and gardens here and there.

New friends should know how the V.H. started. Mr. Burbank's disputed claim that "with basic hereditary factors, tendencies toward variation from type are transmitted to progeny" opened an attractive new flower betterment field to us. We planned to start with the oldest known native species of merit and cross it with the best of new garden decorative effects and "see what would hap-



THE "LILLIAN MURRAY"

An eight spike plant; 3 row double; soft Alice Blue; rose center; 32 in.; 7 ft.



A V.H. TYPE PLANT
Ruffled; pastel pink-blue; 34 in.; 5 ft.

pen" under original methods in an untamed field,—as a leisure hour hobby in study of variation, resistance and seed selection matters. First collecting probable reasons given by specialists for the steady deterioration of so many garden developed flowers, we planned a method of selecting betterments only after fixing desired native qualities and gradually leading to the added decorative effects which mark the garden types. *D. scopolorum* luxuriates in the Sierran region where the oldest living things (*Sequoia gigantea*) existed long before the Ice Age destroyed America's vegetative wealth elsewhere,—hence presumably had fixed dominant qualities through aeons of time under unchanged conditions. The Burbank strain had the best of the world's wealth in coloring, flower size and constant blooming. We aimed to build up a new plant habit and resistance step



THE "NELLIE C. SCHLOSSER"

Typical *D. scopolorum* habits in dainty balance. Soft pink-blue pastels. Inner shortened rows; 40 in.; 7 ft.

by step and upon it fix these fine Burbank attributes if possible. In 1912 we crossed them, recrossing selections in 1914. Good ladies of the California State Floral Society first acclaimed the new forms and colorings, and the P. P. I. Exposition prizes at once made V. H. a "strain" of new promise in the Delphinium world. Some 70,000 seedlings from selections and re-crosses have been used in the work, and only betterment results retained on a ten quality per plant



"SKY LINES" in bud. Five to eleven feet.



"SKY LINES" in flower.—From a nearby loft.

standard. V.H. is therefore a "pure bred" strain,—said to be the only one,—and has none of the old heredity handicaps of *D. elatum* coming down to us through European channels,—fine though their named varieties are. It is an "up-grade" strain at every successive planting, and popularly known everywhere as "The Different Delphiniums." No precedent existed for the work and original meth-

ods in developing it,—bringing tallness, minimum foliage, thin wiry stalks, long spikes and beautiful balance or a symmetry to plants here, as well as daintier and brighter colorings and flower sizes of a new order also.

Progressing Developments. Some have been shown in "Better Delphiniums" issues. All go into the seeds mixture. This year shows betterments in imbrication, symmetrical doubling, more perfect bees, artistry of flower and spike plan, shorter inner rows for contrast, frilling, ruffling, iridescence, equal size to tips in some, an "all out together" type for cutting, extensive blues in self singles and doubles long needed,—and at all times stiff resistance. We finally have light and dark blues in the same flower, a "rainbow" hue developing from former tinted glass effects, and thickened petal experiments offer finest unfadeable in sunlight daintiness in coloring. As expected, this structure change adds extreme plant vigor, with low growth but long spikes of perfect form. While many developments are progressing, we have, we believe, as nearly perfected types in the general V.H. strain as the most particular fancier can desire, and add nothing new until thoroughly tested here. Finally, with some hesitancy we announce unmistakable presence of fragrance in one type, which Mr. Poessel of Chicago is working with us to properly fix. Our botanically perfect double was afforded a way to seed, and gives eight new forms and many variations. Amongst these are exact reproductions of ranunculus, carnation, "double" cosmos, and tubular narcissus flower shapes. Where shall Delphinium lead us? We are also growing a dozen or more native species from afar to, if possible, add now absent features without loss of prized ones. Five yellows unexpectedly appeared in one type seedlings,—hint of coming changes. We still further develop the other fine V.H. things as well.

The New D. *Cardinalis* Hybrids. Nothing we have seen or read about compares in promise to these new plants. We have offers for them but why cannot the whole circle join in their development, a never before opportunity presented to any flower circle? V.H. has an ideal in resistance, habit and form. Some one else will elect color, or spike, or other factor. Thereby the Delphinium world will profit in many new things while V.H. productions will be limited to personal ideals. In 1915 Dr. Babcock of Univ. Calif., botany circles sent in cross-seeds. Though a new cross had to be later made here for a variable start, to him belongs the first vision of this promise. Distressing difficulties were one by one overcome and now new plants suddenly start all the prized qualities we have been working for since 1912. Tall wiry growth, long fine spikes, little foliage, intense coloring, constant growth,—all are present. Five blues now exist with variable bees. Four recent plants with Rhodonite Pink tones give first hint of later pinks and perhaps reds. These fine things may offer a Delph fan "Golden Fleece," since slugs will not here touch them, due probably to blue-black or red stalks and stems and an abundant powdery "bloom" thereon. Try a 25-cent packet of fifty best plants of these in self single and double blue, and a few with self red-purple inner rows. Not one magenta shade has appeared yet. These are distinct from the Burbank x D. *scopolorum* strain making up former V.H., but arises from Vanderbilt x D. *cardinalis*. We have plants listed also.

Our Strain. No claim of superiority is made over the work of others. All of us are striving toward the same ends,—Better Delphiniums. We attempted an entirely untried field of work from the Burbank x D. *scopolorum* cross, perhaps similar to the earliest D. *elatum* start in Europe long ago but here along original methods. To have had the V.H. strain scattered all over the world in so short a time tells the whole story for us. We have proven that betterments in Delphiniums could result in "different" Delphiniums. D. *scopolorum* provided the

base for these, and Burbank decorations properly "trimmed" them up. While the California State Floral Society, the P. P. I. Exposition, the Michell medal, the Pac. Coast Hort. Society and minor recognitions here and at distant points have honored them, our steady aim has been to first provide a strongly resistant, wide variation, artistic strain for the average grower, at same time providing increasing amounts of seeds of finest results in our mixture. Thus each year plantings increase in excellence,—the real test of a perfected strain. We shall appreciate names of Delphinium fanciers who are interested in new forms of the flower.

Our Seeds. First we aimed for highest germination percentage. But quality suffered and extended tests located the trouble. Screened large sizes easily germinate but afford high average of commonest, reedy, quick growing plants. Individual collections of many plants showed finest hybrids to have smallest seeds, gradually developing in size with age of plants. No. 8 or 10 mesh screen lost these. Now we use No. 12 screen, which also allows small dead kernels to pass. We found "blow" cleaning also lost them, hence we now "roll ours." We allow for dried seeds by added quantity of others, and **weigh** out packets. As season progresses, numbers per packet thus increase yet germination average is fairly constant. We constantly test germination here also, and top all spikes to insure maturity, meanwhile evolving new methods of care of seeds,—the basis of good germination in any case. We aim for wide variation and quality of results rather than high germination per seed. An Australian nurseryman wrote in July, "I was satisfied to get 50 plants from imported seed, likewise yours, for the V.H. stock reached me 12 months from collecting and 12,000 miles of water journey here. How astonished I was to have over 500 plants from sowing in the open in winter rains and frost."

A New Offer. We protect larger plantings by placing 80¢ of all new and best things in the mixture. Next taking out our own stock, this specials list is first sent to former V.H. planters in a "specialist" packet for \$1.00, which includes nine favorite types of ten to one hundred plants each in parent colorings as noted, the type groups each having closely resembled habit and color. A mixture of this A to K section of the list is available until mid year only, the remainder then further enriches the larger spring orders supply.

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NOTE:—We guarantee replacements for failure in germination or results standards, when our suggested (on packet) methods are followed.

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THE "BETTER DELPHINIUMS" MAGAZINE

Subscribe for "Better Delphiniums," \$1.00 per year, April and September—24 pages illustrated news of the world's best Delphiniums. No. 6 in September announces a National Delphinium Society membership. A few No. 3, some of 4 and 5 still available at 50c each. Address to title at 230 Bay View Street, San Rafael, Calif. This issue is independent of Vanderbilt Hybrids work. Its columns are open to all. Patronize the specialists who advertise in it and write for it. Send in Delphinium news in your locality, and clippings or mention of printed Delphinium article. The "General Exchange" pages are invaluable to all Delph fans.

V.H. SUPPLIES, 1925

—X—

I. Specialist Packet, \$1.00 mixture of these only.

- A. **Types 100, 200, 300, 500, 3500, 6000.**—Soft pink-blue pastel effects in fine combination forms, some tinted, and few singles.
- B. **Type 600.**—Lightest to deepest self mauves, violets, and purplest in doubles only (here). Beautiful things.
- C. **Types 900, 1500.**—Doubles in rich Harding Blue,—some flamed Amaranth, and doubles in clear Alice Blue. Unusual.
- D. **Types 1000, 2000.**—Belladonna, sky, and delicata shades. Improved only.
- E. **Type 1100.**—Selected glorious singles. Nothing replaces them.
- F. **Types 2000, 2800.**—Deep and clear light blues, dark centers.
- G. **Types 2400, 2700.**—Cutting selections in artistic shaped singles.
- H. **Type 6800.**—Vanderbilt Blue Birds in bright singles.
- I. **Type 2400.**—Deep Blue, large white bees, doubles and singles.
- J. **Type 3600.**—Indescribably fine “tinted glass” effects. Doubles.

We cannot guarantee colors. Seed parents have them here. We plant these same lots for ourselves, and plan to later show line bred percentages of parents.

II. Standard Mixture, ounce \$2.50; half \$1.50; trade packet (500 seeds) 50c; trial 25c.

III. New Things For Trial in 25 cent packets.

- 1. **Type 1600.**—D. cardinalis hybrids in five blues, single, double, self, tinted, shaded or splashed rich purple. A few self red purple inner rows.
- 2. **Type 1600a.** D. cardinalis hybrid selection in steel blue, black center, fine habit and spike.
- 3. **Type 5300.**—Variation of “J. W. Schlosser” (D. card. hyb.) in semi and full doubles outer deep blue, ribs light blue, buff center, short inner red-purple. Gorgeous effect. Large flowered.
- 4. **Type 2100.** Variations of “Debutante” (see B. D. No. 5) in flat, erect, imbricated, rounded flowers of dainty Alice Blue, white bee.

Plants of D. cardinalis hybrids mixed, 60c each, half dozen, \$3.25.

IV. The V.H. Plants in Variety, prepaid in—

- Lot 1. Six months seedlings, unbloomed, mixture seeds, strong roots for early spring bedding and summer blooms; dozen, \$1.50.
- Lot 2. One year, bloomed, rogued, fine clumps for spring; dozen, \$2.75.
- Lot 3. Two and three year clumps, all tested and rated plants. Fine things at, per dozen, \$3.50.

We have no Delphinium disease here. Delivery after AUGUST 1st and until FEBRUARY when they start here. Heeled in together and covered deeply, they weather anywhere. When ground thaws, dig out and plant.

We advise against collecting seeds for planting where different strains are grown. Otherwise patient breeding results are lost.

J. W. SCHLOSSER
N. F. VANDERBILT

VANDERBILT HYBRIDS,
SAN RAFAEL, CALIFORNIA.